

Impact Report

2018

Working for **equality**



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Working for equality





Vision

Our vision in the Immigrant Council of Ireland is of a society that is fair, respects human rights and diversity and is committed to everyone, including people from a migrant background, having the opportunity to fulfil their potential.



Mission

The Immigrant Council of Ireland is a human rights organisation and Independent Law Centre. We support and advocate for the rights of immigrants and their families and act as a catalyst for public debate, legal and policy change.



Values

The values which inform and drive the work of the Immigrant Council are:

- We are rights based, supporting justice and equality for all
- We respect and support the empowerment of migrants, working in solidarity
- We embrace and promote diversity and inclusion
- Gender equality is central to our work
- We work in partnership and collaboration to achieve our goals
- We are innovative in our approaches and value an evidence-based approach
- We practice good governance

Over 18 years and going strong, we have been a leading voice in securing improved rights and protections which benefit Irish citizens, migrants and their families.

The organisation provides three tiers of support to migrants:



1.

Our primary support is a helpline which provides over-the-phone advice on all immigration queries. The helpline answered more than 3,500 calls in 2018.

2.


The second tier of support is when a telephone call is deemed insufficient and we need a face-to-face meeting to provide a deeper level of support.

3.

The third and most in-depth support is provided by the lawyers in our Independent Law Centre, who take between 50 and 100 cases per year.

In addition to our service provision, the organisation also undertakes substantial research and activity in the areas of anti-trafficking, anti-racism and integration.

2018 SNAPSHOT – A YEAR IN ACTION

January		Launch: Young person's guide to immigration
February		Rock Against Racism: Dundalk concert
March		Migrant Mobilisation Conference: promoting political involvement
April		Migrant Leadership Academy: capacity building with migrant leaders
May		Joint submission to the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service about Family Reunification programmes
June		Response to US Trafficking in Persons Report which downgraded Ireland to a Tier 2 country
July		#BloodyForeigners Day of Action
August		Transport Against Racism campaign #JoinUsOnTheJourney to #EndRacism
September		Great news for Hanna*, our client, who secured residence for herself, her husband and two children
October		Disrupt Demand national conference comparing EU legislative approaches to tackle human trafficking
November		Launch of #GoVote local election videos
December		Information session on Ireland's immigration system held for politicians in Leinster House

* Not her real name

INFORMATION SERVICE

In 2018 our dedicated staff answered

3,500+ helpline queries



FACTS:



An increase of more than 500 queries in 2018 compared with 2017



Our helpline is strictly confidential, friendly and helpful



100% reach across Ireland



Broad geographical reach of over 58 countries

Our helpline answered questions on various aspects of immigration:

32.9%
Family reunification and related issues (1,155 queries)

24.5%
EU Treaty Rights, visa and regularisation of undocumented people (863 queries)

22.7%
Security of residence status and related issues (797 queries)

7.6%
Business and employment permits including workplace rights (267 queries)

12.3%
Other (433 queries)

TOP 3 INDIVIDUAL QUERIES



Security of residence



EU Treaty Rights, visa and regularisation of undocumented & renewals



Family reunification

135

Different nationalities contacted us

1

Stateless case

435

Queries from outside Ireland compared with 303 queries in 2017



Gender Breakdown
Male = 49.35%
Female = 50.65%



SHARING KNOWLEDGE

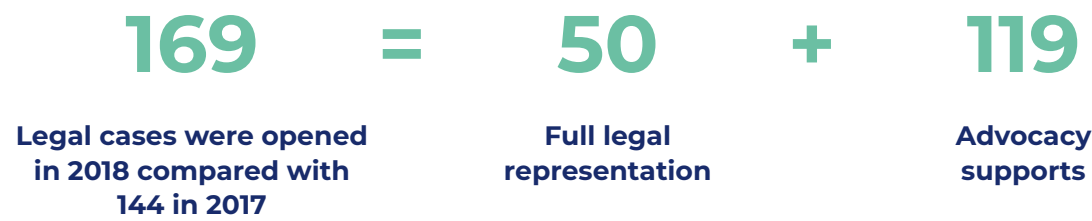
Training on immigrant rights and entitlements, citizenship and EU Treaty Rights were provided to **over 140 people** working in Citizens Information Centres in counties Dublin, Cork, Kerry, Kildare, Leitrim, Louth, Meath and Roscommon.

An **information session** on our helpline and **Ireland's immigration system** was held for TDs, Senators and their advisers in **Leinster House** in December.



The legal team in our Independent Law Centre is professional, selfless and committed to pursuing justice for our clients.

We also supported individuals to make their own application and/ or make submissions on their behalf. This attests to our continued empowerment strategy for immigrants so they are enabled and supported to self-advocate.



Children

The Immigrant Council of Ireland has specific expertise supporting migrant children.

In 2018 we provided legal advice, in some cases full representation, in 41 cases relating to under 18s.

The top issues were:

- 1. Child refugees seeking family reunification
- 2. Immigration status (including regularisation)
- 3. Citizenship
- 4. Children trafficked for the purposes of sexual exploitation

Case Study

Hanna*, a mother of four children, two of whom were Irish, sought advice to secure residency for herself, husband and her two children. She was referred to the Immigrant Council of Ireland and met with our legal team.

* Not her real name



“

As well as legal advice, Catherine helped us with practical elements, including filling in the form and making sure we had all the right documents together.

Without Catherine’s help we definitely wouldn’t have got everything done so quickly. It would have been difficult to know exactly which documents we needed to submit, so her help sorting through what we needed to send was invaluable. She also helped us write the accompanying letters.

Unlike other organisations, the Immigrant Council was so professional and prompt. They made an appointment quickly and went through everything then and there. I couldn’t believe it when we got a positive decision six months after sending everything in.

It’s difficult to describe how important their help was – yes, it was useful, but it was a lot more than that! **The most important thing they did was give you hope.** We didn’t know what was going to happen, but Catherine really listened to us, understood our situation and helped us every step of the way!”

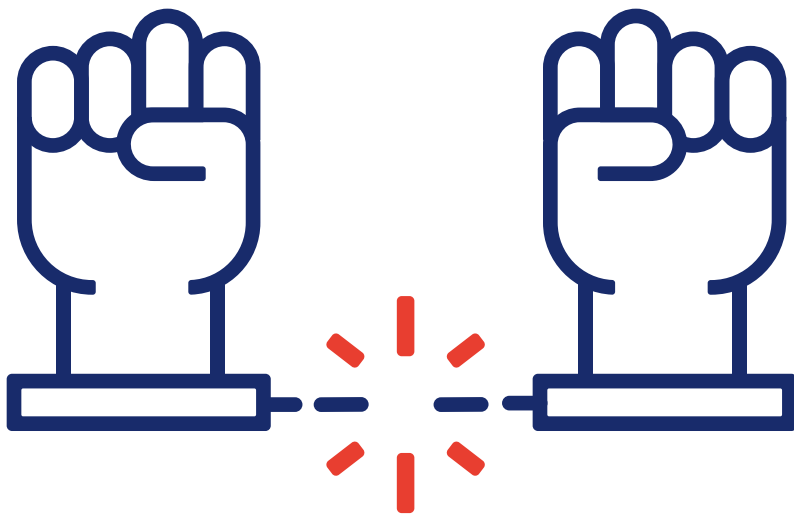
Trafficking in Human Beings

In 2018, we provided legal advice and assistance to 23 victims of trafficking who came from several African, South American and Asian countries.

All but three were trafficked for the purposes of sexual exploitation (two were trafficked for domestic servitude and one for labour exploitation).

All were female.

Issues arising in these cases related to formal identification as a victim of trafficking and granting of temporary residence permission; renewals of temporary residence permission; residence as parent of Irish citizen child; change of status; citizenship by naturalisation; travel document applications; family reunification and proposed deportation.



How we work with victims of trafficking

Adaora* was brought to Ireland as the alleged family member of an EU citizen for the purpose of sexual exploitation. She was subjected to horrific abuse and rape. With the assistance of a teacher she was able to escape that scenario.

Our supports for Adaora began when she was referred to us in 2017 by an organisation that supports victims of trafficking. The authorities had already revoked the residence status granted to her and she had applied for leave to remain following proposed deportation.

At that stage she had been living in direct provision for over a year. Even though she had provided statements to the Gardaí and a human trafficking investigation was underway, plus she had been referred to the relevant stakeholders under the National Referral Mechanism, she had not been granted a recovery and reflection period or temporary residence permission.

At our first meeting with Adaora she explained that she had started a relationship and was due to give birth to her first baby very soon. We advised her to make an application to be recognised as a victim of

trafficking but understandably she wanted to focus on her baby and the challenges of being a new mother. A few months later we met with Adaora again and we advised her to make the application for temporary residence as well as residence as the parent of an Irish citizen child. We made both applications in early 2018.

Following our representations to the Department of Justice, and months of back and forth correspondence throughout 2018, she was granted a temporary residence permission as a victim of trafficking. That was almost two and half years after she had come to the attention of the authorities. She still awaits a decision on the Irish citizen child application.

The delay in being recognised as a victim of trafficking has meant that Adaora is still dealing with practical issues that are delaying her moving on. She is still living in direct provision. We are continuing to support Adaora with the legal advice and representation she needs.

* Not her real name

Anti-trafficking policy & research

PREVENTING TRAFFICKING OF WOMEN FOR SEXUAL EXPLOITATION IN IRELAND

Targeting demand from buyers of prostitution that fosters the sexual exploitation of trafficked women and girls remained the focus of our work in 2018. In October we hosted an international conference “Disrupt Demand” with political representatives, survivors of prostitution and international experts from 6 EU Member States discussing the importance of the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 2017 in Ireland. In focus was also its wider implication for the EU, with an increasing number of countries adopting the Nordic approach to prostitution that decriminalises sellers and discourages buyers of sex.

As part of the Disrupt Demand project we produced a novel transnational comparative research report identifying best practices in discouraging demand through legal measures. The work was funded by the European Commission and a high-level briefing in the European Parliament brought international attention to this work led by the Immigrant Council of Ireland.

PROTECTING TRAFFICKED SEXUALLY EXPLOITED WOMEN IN IRELAND

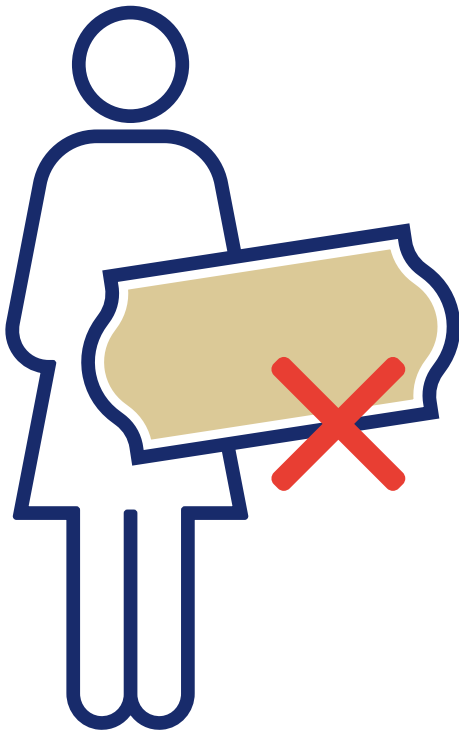
Our anti-trafficking team led in the production of a legal analysis of the protection measures in the EU Anti-trafficking Directive (2011/36/EU) from the perspective of trafficked women, as part of an initiative of the European Institute for Gender Equality.

The 2018 annual report on Trafficking in Persons downgraded the anti-trafficking response of the State to Tier 2, in recognition of chronic deficiencies in the protection of victims among other problems. Our submission to the authors of the report very early in the year exposed the cumbersome identification process alongside the significant lack of gender-specific accommodation for trafficked women recovering from sexual abuses and exploitation.

The Immigrant Council initiative on gender-specific legal assistance for the integration of trafficked women and the involvement of peer-to-peer support from survivors was awarded EU funding in late 2018. We are looking forward to piloting this innovative initiative with partners in 5 other EU Member States.

COOPERATION WITH STAKEHOLDERS IN THE FIGHT AGAINST TRAFFICKING IN IRELAND AND BEYOND

The anti-trafficking team continued to work collaboratively with the State and non-governmental actors. We delivered modules to the An Garda Síochána trainings on human trafficking and participated in the EU Civil Society Anti-trafficking Platform, as one of the identified key NGOs working on human trafficking in the State. In recognition of the Immigrant Council’s expertise, we were invited to join the European Asylum Support Office expert group on vulnerabilities among refugee populations, which include among others children, victims of human trafficking and gender-based violence.



Expert contributions help to influence and shape debate on policy changes at local, national and international levels including at European level.

The Integration Hub facilitates the development of good practice and policy on migrant integration along with preventing and addressing racism and promoting civic and political participation of migrants.

Among our current priorities are the development and implementation of effective local and national integration strategies, promoting migrant political involvement, building migrant leadership, empowering communities and working to combat racism.

Integration Hub priorities in 2018:

- [#BloodyForeigners](#)
- [Transport Against Racism](#)
- [Racist Incidents Support](#)
- [Training](#)

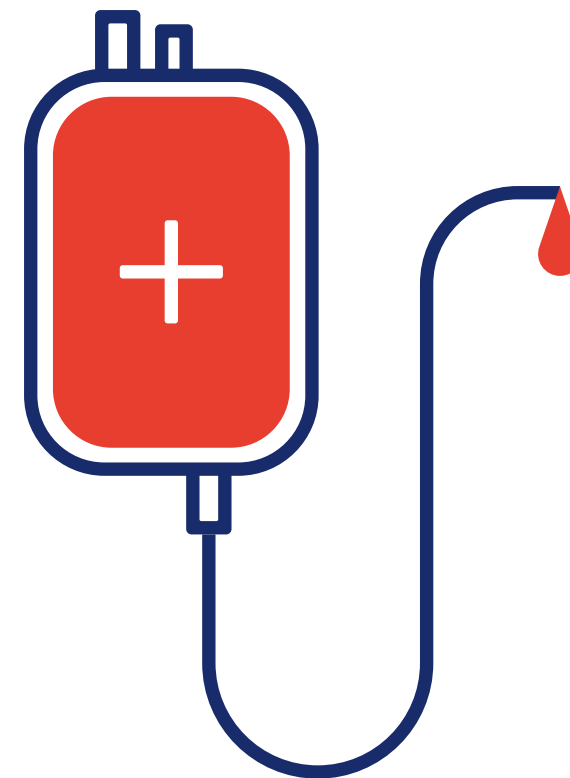
#Bloody Foreigners

The Immigrant Council of Ireland joined forces with the Irish Blood Transfusion Service and Forum Polonia for the [#BloodyForeigners](#) campaign, highlighting the contribution of Polish nationals to the Irish blood bank. It encouraged more people to come forward at the same time as challenging prejudice and discrimination. The campaign culminated in a Day of Action on 30 July, which resulted in widespread media coverage, new donors and [#BloodyForeigners](#) top trending on social media.

“

When I first heard the campaign was called [#BloodyForeigners](#) I thought it was weird and wondered what was going on, but I looked it up and heard all the positive stories and realised it was a great idea. The name has definitely grown on me and I think it's a really good way to engage people because they will look twice when they hear it.”

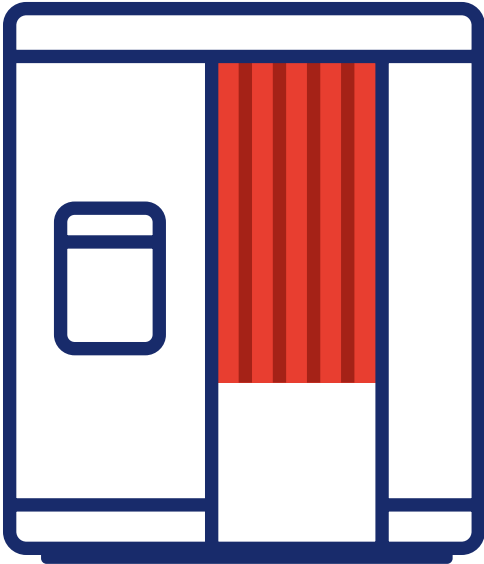
Tomasz



Transport Against Racism

This year we had an even bigger and stronger anti-racism campaign. In partnership with Transport for Ireland, Dublin City Council and alongside transport operators, we brought 6 photo booths to transport centres around the country and collected over 1,000 donated selfies. These images were combined to produce a composite image of a man and woman which was used in the main artwork for the campaign.

Over 1,600 posters were displayed on Ireland's transport system during the 2 week campaign period in August 2018.



TWEETS

We received positive feedback from people retweeting about the event and sharing their photos with the hashtags #JoinUsOnTheJourney and #EndRacism

“

I believe it is important to fight against racism so we can give everyone an equal chance & stop prejudging people based on information we THINK we know.”

Thoughtful words from #Dalia.
#JoinUsOnTheJourney &
#EndRacism

“

I think that racism is learned, and now it's time to change the syllabus and teach love.”

#Darren #JoinUsOnTheJourney
#EndRacism

“

I support ending racism full stop. We are all humanity...”

#John #JoinUsOnTheJourney

“

I have always suffered from #racism. Now, it is time to work against it.”

A personal message from #Talal

Join us on the journey



Racism has no place on Public Transport



Racist Incidents Support and Referral Service

We continue to provide support and referrals to those who have experienced racism via our anti-racism helpline. The reports also inform our campaigns to end racism.

In 2018 we provided support to 25 people who reported a racist incident to us.



HOW WE HELP

Ms X, who is African, lives in an apartment complex with her son. They had been subject to repeated verbal racial abuse and threats of physical violence from her neighbours. Ms X contacted us for advice and support after the abuse became physical. The incident was reported to the Gardaí who initiated “keep the peace” talks with the neighbours. The abusers retreated after the talks. Ms X was distressed and worried about their safety and apprehensive that the “peace” will not last.



INFORMATION / SUPPORT

We listened to Ms X, who outlined everything which had happened to her and her son and we supported her to gather all information together to support her case.



REPORT

We assisted her to follow up the matter with the Garda Racial, Intercultural and Diversity Office and other relevant agencies.



ACCESS

The Gardaí provided a letter of support recommending that alternative housing should be availed for the family, but Ms X did not want to move from her home where her son was settled in school. We supported her to approach the local council to take action.



REFERRAL

We offered ongoing support to Ms X and her son. She did not require further referral at this stage. We remain in contact with Ms X and her son and will support her until the matter is fully resolved according to her wishes.



RESULT

The experience of Ms X will feed into our ongoing advocacy work and recommendations to local authority housing providers regarding the need for effective anti-racism, diversity and inclusion policies.

Training



POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

We provide information and advice to people from a migrant background about their voting rights and how the Irish political system operates.

27 workshops
across Ireland reaching
450+ people

“

Very insightful and informative.”

“

I liked learning about the way votes are counted and that all votes are accounted for and valued.”

“

Good info about election. It was clear and concise.”

“

Everything about the workshop is excellent.”



DIVERSITY AND ANTI-RACISM

Recognising Ireland’s increasing diversity we developed various training programmes for workplaces to assist in the creation of diversity strategies; challenge unconscious bias and promote interculturalism and equality.

8 workshops
reaching
130+ people

“

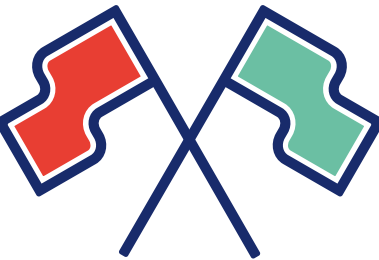
I feel more confident about talking to immigrants.”

“

Very useful training for anyone working with the general public and especially with cultural diversity.”

“

The training will greatly benefit me as a youth worker with young people from Syria.”



MEDIA AND ADVOCACY

We provided training to upskill community leaders, social entrepreneurs and other people from a migrant background.

4 workshops
reaching
35+ people

“

We were inspired to actually hold the event we had mock planned in the training – the St Patrick’s Day Cupcake Giveaway. We baked and gave out cupcakes with different flags at our local parade to illustrate the diversity of the Irish community, celebrating the national holiday together.”



MIGRANT EMPOWERMENT

During 2018 we ran a number of capacity building programmes to empower immigrants. This included improving skills in areas including community organising, networking and social justice campaigning. Our specialised Councillor-Migrant Internship Scheme matched migrants with an interest in politics with local councillors for a four-month programme.

Democracy Camp:
60 attendees

Leadership Academy:
16 attendees

Local Political Internships:
5 interns

“

Thanks for the spotlight - the internship opportunity provided by the Immigrant Council was instrumental in my nomination and confirmation. I am grateful to the Immigrant Council of Ireland for the Internship opportunity that contributed to my journey so far.”

Uruemu Adejinmi
– political intern

“

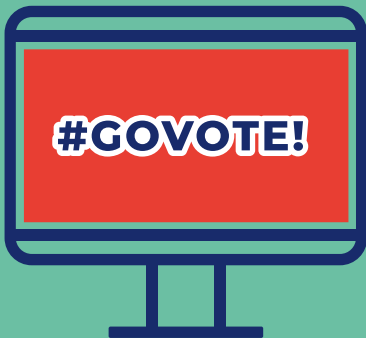
I got enormous benefit from the scheme as it opened my eyes to the barriers that migrants face in becoming active in political life in this country. I now understand more fully the need to have programmes such as this Migrant-Councillor Internship Scheme available on a widespread basis throughout the whole country.”

Independent Councillor Joe Behan



MOBILISATION AND PARTNERSHIP

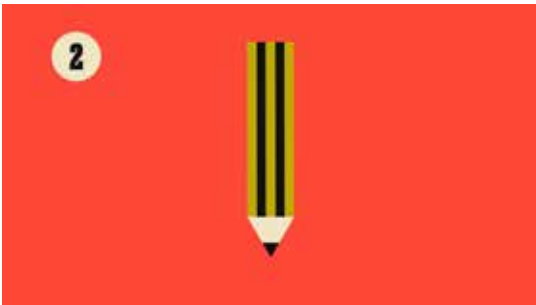
In March, the Immigrant Council of Ireland joined forces with 7 other NGOs and brought together 100 migrant leaders to promote political engagement between migrant communities and political parties. Representatives from across the political spectrum were invited to attend and provided information on how to get involved and to increase their understanding of the needs of migrant communities. There was a follow up event in Cork in September.



POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

To promote the message to all migrants to register and vote (and even run!) in the 2019 local elections we produced 10 videos in 10 different languages with all the essential information and distributed them digitally.

10 videos
got over
100,000 views



SHARING & IMPROVING EXPERTISE

In 2018 we published:

Immigration Status in Ireland: What do I need to know?

A guide designed with and by young people. The report was launched by Minister of State for Equality, Immigration and Integration, David Stanton, TD.

Keeping it local: Discussion document and proposed actions for Local Authorities on developing local migrant integration strategies

A report on Local Authority local integration strategies launched by Minister of State for Local Government and Election Reform, John Paul Phelan, TD.

Disrupt Demand Country and Comparative Reports

These reports were the culmination of a two year research project examining legislative approaches to prostitution and human trafficking in six EU member states, including Ireland, launched by the Finnish National Rapporteur on Trafficking in Human Beings.

Communications



200+

Media hits in 2018



17,825

Facebook followers on 31 December 2018



10,381

Twitter followers on 31 December 2018

Acknowledgement and thanks

We could not achieve this without the generous support of our funders, including:



Co-funded by the Internal Security Fund of the European Union



Tomar Trust
National influence, Local implementation



EUROPEAN UNION
Investing in your future
European Social Fund



EUROPEAN UNION
Asylum, Migration
and Integration Fund




An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt
agus Comhionannais
Department of Justice
and Equality

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